

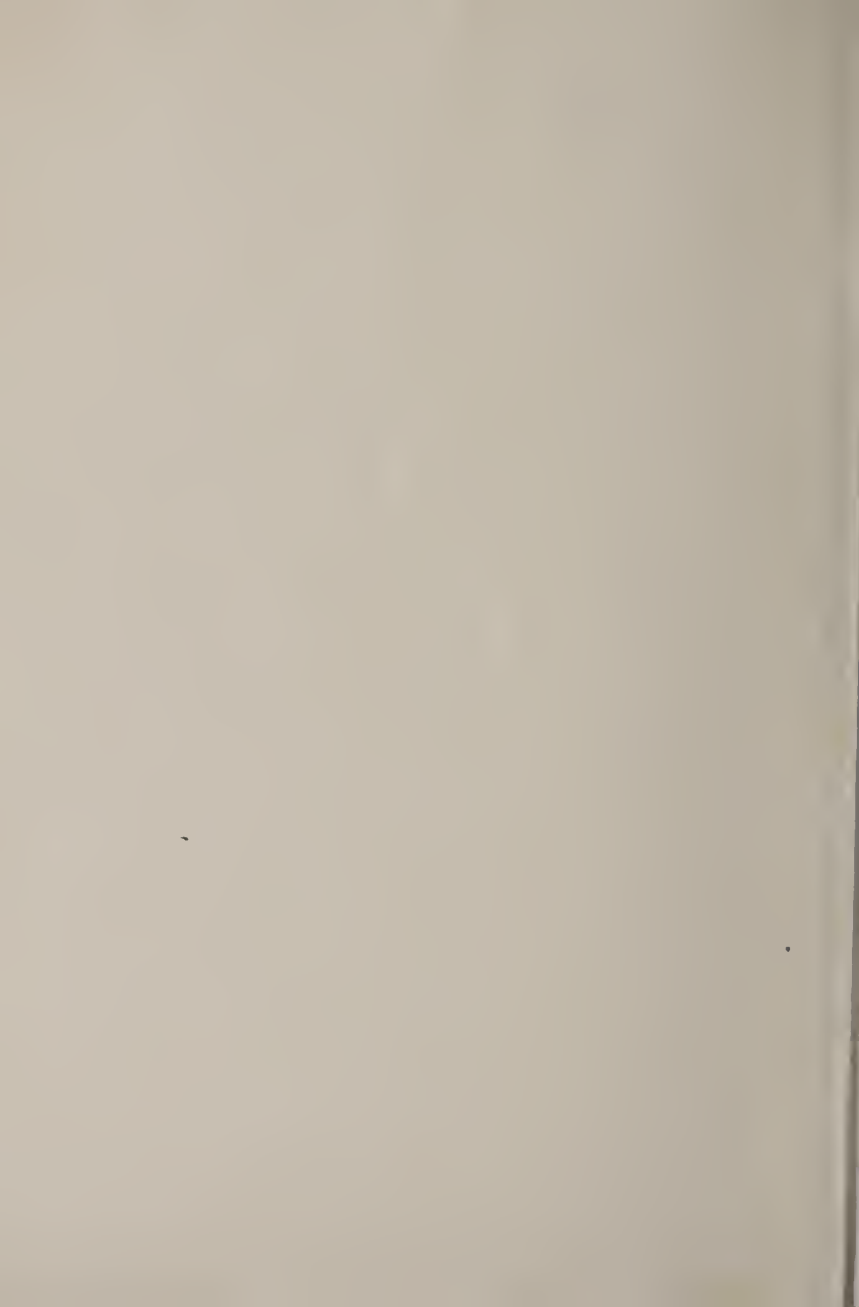
ON

BY

DELIVERED AT

NEW YORK

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1896



ADDRESS
ON
VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

BY
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

“THE IDEAL OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION”

DELIVERED AT
HARDMAN HALL

NEW YORK

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1896

HARLES & WRIGHT,
PRINTERS AND STATIONERS,
532 SIXTH AVENUE.

THE IDEAL OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

HOW IT MUST EMBRACE DIFFERENT TYPES OF
MINDS AND METHODS.

WHERESOEVER our senses reach, or our minds can imagine, we find action and reaction of the two forces, one counter-acting the other, causing the constant play of these two, the mixed phenomena that we see around us or feel in our mind. In the external world, it is expressing itself in physical matter, as attraction and repulsion, centripetal and centrifugal. In the internal world, it explains the various mixed feelings of our nature, the opposites, love and hatred, good and evil. We repel some things, we attract some things. We are attracted by someone, we are repelled by someone. Many times in our lives we find without any reason whatsoever we, as it were, are attracted toward certain persons; at other times, similarly, mysteriously, we are repelled by others. This is patent to all, and the higher the field of action, the more potent, the more remarkable, are the actions of these forces. Religion is the highest plane of human thought, and herein we find that the actions of these two forces have been most marked. The intensest love that humanity has ever known has come from religion, and the most diabolical hatred that humanity has known has come from religion. The noblest words of peace that the world has ever heard have come from men on this plane, and the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known has sprung from religious men. The higher the object, the

finer the organization, the more remarkable are its actions. So we find that in religion these two forces are very remarkable in their actions. No other human interest has deluged the world so much in blood, as religion; at the same time nothing has built so many hospitals and asylums for the poor; no other human influence has taken such care, not only of humanity, but of the lowest animals, as religion. Nothing makes us so cruel as religion, nothing makes us so tender as religion. This has been in the past, and will be in the future. Yet from the midst of this din and turmoil, and strife, and struggling, the hatred and jealousy of religions and sects, from time to time, arise potent voices, crying above all this noise, making themselves heard from pole to pole, as it were, for peace, for harmony. Will it ever come?

Our subject for discussion is, is it possible that there ever should come harmony in this tremendous plane of struggle? The world is agitated in the latter part of this century by questions of harmony; in society, various plans are being proposed, various attempts are made to carry them into practice, but we know how difficult that is. People find it is almost impossible to mitigate the fury of the struggle of life, to tone down the tremendous nervous tension that is in man. Now, if it is so difficult to bring harmony and peace and love in this little bit of our life which deals with the physical plane of man, the external, gross, outward side, a thousand times more difficult is it, to bring peace and harmony in that internal nature of man. I would ask you for the time being to come out of the network of words; we are hearing from childhood such words as love and peace and brotherhood, and equality, and universal brotherhood. But they have become words without meaning, which we repeat like parrots, and it is natural for us to do so. We cannot help it. Great gigantic souls, who felt in their hearts these great ideas, first manufactured these words, and at that time

many understood their meaning. Later, ignorant people take the words and play upon them, and religion becomes a play in their hands, mere frothy words, not to be carried into practice. It becomes "my father's religion," "our nation's religion," "your country's religion," and so forth. It becomes only a phase of patriotism. To bring harmony in religion, therefore, must be most difficult. Yet we will try to study this phenomenon.

We see that in every religion there are three parts—I mean in every great and recognized religion. First there is the philosophy, the doctrines, the ideals of that religion, which embodies the goal, embodies as it were, the whole scope of that religion, lays before its votaries and followers, the principle of that religion, the way to reach the goal; next that philosophy is embodied in mythology. So the second part is mythology. This mythology comes in the form of lives of men, or of supernatural beings, and so forth. It is the same thing as philosophy made a little more concrete, the abstractions of philosophy become concretized in the lives of men and supernatural beings. The last portion is the ritual. This is still more concrete, forms and ceremonies, various physical attitudes, flowers and incense, and everything that appeals to the senses. In this consists the ritual. You will find that everywhere, recognized religions have all these three. Some lay more stress on one side, some on the other. We will take the first part, philosophy. Is there any universal philosophy for the world? Not yet. Each religion brings out its own doctrines, and insists upon them as being the only real ones. And not only does it do that, but it thinks that the man who does not believe them, must go to some horrible place. Some of them will not stop there; they will draw the sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human brain called fanaticism. They are very sincere, these fanatics,

the most sincere of human beings. but they are not more responsible than any other lunatics in the world.

This disease of fanaticism is one of the most dangerous of all diseases. All the wickedness of human nature is aroused by it. Anger is stirred up, nerves are strung high, and human beings become like tigers. Is there any similarity, is there any harmony. any universal mythology? Certainly not. Each religion has its own mythology, with only this difference, that each one says "*My*" stories are not mythologies." For instance take the question home. I simply mean to illustrate it; I do not mean any criticism of any religion. The Christian believes that God took the shape of a dove, and came down, and they think this is history, and not mythology. But the Hindu believes that God is manifested in the cow. Christians say that is mythology, and not history: superstition. The Jews think that if an image be made in the form of a box, or a chest, with an angel on either side, then it is to be placed in the Holy of Holies; it is sacred to Jehovah; but if the image be made in the form of a beautiful man or woman. they say "This horrible idol; break it down!" This is our unity in mythology! If a man stands up and says "My prophet did such and such a wonderful thing," others say that is superstition; but their prophet did a still more wonderful thing; they say that this is historical. Nobody in the world as far as I have seen, is able to find out the fine distinction between history and mythology in the brains of these gentlemen. All these stories are mythological, mixed up with a little history.

Next come the rituals. One sect has one particular form of ritual, and thinks that is the holy form, and that the rituals of another sect are simply arrant superstition. If one sect worships a peculiar sort of symbol, another sect says "Oh. it's horrible." Take for instance the most general form of symbol. The Phallus

symbol is certainly a sexual symbol, but gradually that part of it was forgotten, and it stands as a symbol of the Creator. Those nations which have this as their symbol never think of it as the Phallus; it is just a symbol, and there it ends. But a man from another race sees in it nothing but the Phallus, and begins to condemn it, yet at the same time may be doing something that to the Phallic worshipper appears most horrible. I will take two points, the Phallus symbol and the sacrament of the Christians. To the Christians the Phallus is horrible, and to the Hindus the Christian sacrament is horrible. They say that the Christian sacrament, the killing of a man and eating his flesh and blood to get the good qualities of that man, is cannibalism. This is what some of the savage tribes do; if a man is brave they kill him and eat his heart, because they think it will give them the qualities of bravery possessed by that man. Even such a devout Christian as Sir John Lubbock admits this, and says the origin of this symbol is in this savage idea. The Christians generally do not admit this idea of its origin; and what it may imply never comes to their mind. It stands for a holy thing, and that is all they want to know. So even in rituals there is no universal symbol, which can lead to general recognition. Where then is this universality? How is it possible then to have a universal form of religion? That already exists.

We all hear about universal brotherhood, and how societies stand up and want to preach this. I remember an old story. In India, wine drinking is considered very horrible. There were two brothers who wanted to drink some wine, secretly, in the night, and their uncle, who was a very strongly old-fashioned man, was sleeping in a room quite near where they were going to have their drinking. So before they began to drink, each one said to the other, 'Silence! uncle will wake up.' As they went on drinking,

they began to *shout* to each other, "Silence ! uncle will wake up." So, as the shouting increased, uncle woke up, and he came into the room, and found out the whole thing. Universal brotherhood. "we are all equal, therefore make a sect." As soon as you make a sect you protest against equality, and thus it is no more. Mohammedans say universal brotherhood, but what comes in reality? Nobody who is not a Mohammedan will be admitted ; he will have his throat cut. The Christians say universal brotherhood ; but anyone who is not a Christian must go to that place and be eternally barbecued.

So we are being carried on in this world after universal brotherhood and equality, universal equality of property, and thought, and everything. And I would simply ask you to look askance, and be a little reticent, and take a little care of yourselves when you hear such talk in this world ; behind it many times comes intensest selfishness. "In the winter sometimes a cloud comes ; it roars and roars, but it does not rain ; but in the rainy season the clouds speak not, but deluge the world with water." So those who are *really* workers, and *really* feel the universal brotherhood of man, do not talk much, do not make little sects for universal brotherhood, but their acts, their whole body, their posture, their movements, their walk, eating, drinking, their whole life, show that brotherhood for mankind, that love and sympathy for all. They do not speak, they *do*. This world is getting full of blustering talk. We want a little more work, and less talk.

So far we see that it is hard to find any universal ideas in this, and yet we know they exist. We are all human beings, but are we all equal? Certainly not. Who says we are equal? Only the man who is a lunatic ; he alone can say we are all equal. Are we all equal in our brains, in our powers, in our bodies? One man is stronger than another, one man has more brain power than another. If we are all

equal, why is this inequality? Who made it? *He*. Because we have more or less powers, more brain, more physical strength; it must make a difference. Yet we know that the doctrine appeals to us. Take another case. We are all human beings here, but there are some men, and some women. Here is a black man, there a white man, but all are men, all humanity. Various faces; I see no two faces here the same, yet we are all human beings. Where is this humanity? I cannot find it. When I try to analyze it, I do not find where it is. Either I find a man or a woman; either dark or fair; and among all these faces, that abstract humanity which is the common thing, I do not find when I try to grasp, to sense, and actualize it, and think of it. It is beyond the senses; it is beyond thought, beyond the mind. Yet I know, and am certain it is there. If I am certain of anything here, it is this humanity which is a common quality among all. And yet I cannot find it. This humanity is what you call God. "In Him we live and move and have our being." In Him and through Him we have our being. It is through this I see you as a man or a woman, yet, when I want to catch or formulate it, it is nowhere, because it is beyond the senses, and yet we know that in it, and through it, everything exists. So with this universal one-ness and sympathy, this universal religion which runs through all these various religions as God; it must and does exist through eternity. "I am the thread that runs through all these pearls." and each pearl is one of these sects. They are all the different pearls, but the Lord is the thread that runs through all of them, only the majority of mankind are entirely unconscious of it; yet they are working in it, and through it; not a moment can they stand outside it, because all work is only possible through and in it; yet we cannot formulate it, it is God Himself.

Unity in variety is the plan of the universe. Just as we are all men, yet we are all separate. As humanity I am one with you, and as Mr. So-and-so I am different from you. As a man you are separate from the woman; as a human being you are one with the woman. As a man you are separate from the animal, but as a living being, the man, the woman, the animal, the plant, are all one, and as existence, you are one with the whole universe. That existence is God, the ultimate Unity in this universe. In Him we are all one. At the same time, in manifestation, these differences must always remain. In our work, in our energies that are being manifested outside, these differences must remain always. We find then that if by the idea of a universal religion is meant one set of doctrines should be believed by all mankind, it is impossible, it can never be, any more than there will be a time when all faces will be the same. Again if we expect that there will be one universal mythology, that is also impossible, it cannot be. Neither can there be one universal ritual. This cannot be. When that time will come, this world will be destroyed, because variety is the first principle of life. What makes us formed beings? Differentiation. Perfect balance will be destruction. Suppose the amount of heat in this room, whose tendency is perfect diffusion, gets that diffusion, that heat will cease to be. What makes motion in this universe? Lost balance. That is all. That sort of unity can only come when this universe will be destroyed, but in the world such a thing is impossible. Not only so, it is dangerous. We must not seek that all of us should think alike. There would then be no thought to think. We would be all alike, like Egyptian mummies in a museum, looking at each other without thought to think. It is this difference of thought, this differentiation, losing of the balance of thought, which is the very soul of our progress, the soul of thought. This must always be.

What then do I mean by the ideal of a universal religion? I do not mean a universal philosophy, or a universal mythology, or a universal ritual, but I mean that this world must go on wheel within wheel, this intricate mass of machinery, most intricate, most wonderful. What can we do? We can make it run smoothly, we can lessen the friction, we can grease the wheels, as it were. By what? By recognizing variation. Just as we have recognized unity, by our very nature, so we must also recognize variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and each one yet be true. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints, and yet be the same thing. Take for instance the sun. Suppose a man standing on the earth looks at the sun when it rises in the morning; he sees a big ball. Suppose he starts toward the sun and takes a camera with him, taking photographs at every stage of his journey, at every thousand miles he takes a fresh photograph, until he reaches the sun. At each stage, each photograph was different from the other photographs; in fact when he gets back, he brings with him so many thousands of photographs of so many different suns, as it were, and yet we know it was the same sun photographed by the man at every stage of his progress. Even so with the Lord. Greater or less, through high philosophy or low, through the highest or lowest doctrines, through the most refined mythology or the most gross, through the most refined ritualism or the grossest, every sect, every soul, every nation, every religion, consciously or unconsciously, is struggling upward, Godward, and each vision is that of Him and of none else. Suppose we each one of us go with a particular pot in our hand to fetch water from a lake. Suppose one has a cup, another a jar, another a bigger jar, and so forth, and we all fill them. When we take them up, the water in each case has got into the form of the vessel. He who brought the cup, has water in the

form of a cup, he who brought the jar, his water is in the shape of a jar, and so forth; but, in every case, water, and nothing but water is in the vessel. So, in the case of religion, our minds are like these little pots, and each one of us is seeing God. God is like that water filling these different vessels, and in each vessel, the vision of God comes in the form of the vessel. Yet He is One. He is God in every case. This is the recognition that we can get.

So far it is all right theoretically, but is there any way of practically working it out? We find that this recognition that all these various views are true, has been very, very old. Hundreds of attempts have been made in India, in Alexandria, in Europe, in China, in Japan, in Thibet, latest in America, in various countries attempts have been made to formulate a harmonious religious creed to make all come together in love, instead of fighting. And yet they have all failed. Because there was no practical plan. They admitted that all these religions were right, but they had no practical way of bringing them together, and yet keeping that individuality. That plan alone will be practical, which does not destroy the individuality of any man in religion, and at the same time shows him a point of union. But so far, all these plans that have been tried, while proposing to take in all these various views, have in practice, tried to bring them down to a few doctrines, and so have produced merely a fresh sect, fighting, struggling and pushing.

I have also my little plan. I do not know whether it will work or not and I want to present it to you for discussion. What is my plan? In the first place I would ask mankind to recognize this maxim—"Do not destroy." Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the world. Break not anything down, but build. Help, if you can, if you cannot fold your hands and stand by, and see things go on. Do not injure, if you cannot help. Therefore destroy not, say not

a word against any man's convictions so far as they are sincere. Secondly, take man where he stands, and from thence give him a lift. If the theory be right, that God is the centre, and each one of us individuals is moving along one of the lines of the radii, it is then perfectly true that each one of us *must* come to the centre, and at the centre, where all these radii meet, all differences will cease, but until we have come there, differences must be. And yet all these radii converge to the same centre. One of us is by nature travelling in one of these lines, and another in another, and so we only want a push along the line we are in, and we will come to the centre, because "all roads lead to Rome." Therefore, destroy not. Each one of us is naturally developing according to our own nature; each nature will come to the highest truth, and men must teach themselves. What can you and I do? Do you think you can teach even a child? You cannot. A child teaches himself. Your duty is to remove the obstacles. A plant grows. Do you make the plant grow? Your duty is to put a hedge round, and see that no animal eats up the plant, and there it ends. The plant must grow itself. So in the spiritual growth of every man. None can teach you; none can make you spiritual; you have to teach yourselves; the growth must come from inside, out.

What can an external teacher do? He can remove the obstructions a little, and there his duty ends. Therefore help, if you can, but do not destroy. Give up all such ideas that *you* can make men spiritual. It is impossible. There is no other teacher but your own soul. Admit this. What comes? In society we see so many various natures of mankind. There are thousands and thousands of varieties of minds and inclinations. A practical generalization will be impossible, but for my purpose I have sufficiently characterized them into four. First the active working man; he wants work; tremendous energy in his muscles

and his nerves. He likes to work, build hospitals, do charitable works, make streets, and do all sorts of work, planning, organizing; an active man. There is then the emotional man, who loves the sublime and the beautiful to an excessive degree. He wants to think of the beautiful, the mild part of nature, Love, and the God of love, and all these things he likes. He loves with his whole heart those great souls of ancient times, the prophets of religions, the incarnations of God on earth; he does not care whether reason can prove that Christ existed, or Buddha existed; he does not care for the exact date when the Sermon on the Mount was preached, or the exact moment of Christ's birth; what he cares for is His personality, the figure before him. He does not even care whether it can be proved that such-and-such men existed or not. Such is his ideal. Such a nature as I have pictured, is the lover; he is the emotional man. Then again there is the mystic man, whose mind wants to analyze its own self, understand the workings of the human mind, the psychology, what are the forces that are working inside, how to manipulate and know and get control over them. This is the mystical mind. There is then the philosopher, who wants to weigh everything, and use his intellect even beyond the philosophy.

Now a religion to satisfy the largest portion of mankind, must be able to supply food for all these various minds, and this is wanting, the existing sects are all one-sided. You go to one sect. Suppose they preach love and emotion. They begin to sing and weep, and they preach love and all sorts of good things in life, but as soon as you say "My friend, that is all right, but I want something stronger than that; give me an ounce of reason, a little philosophy; I want to handle things more gradually." "Get out," they say, and they not only say get out, but want to send you to the other place, if they can. The result is, that sect can only help

people of an emotional mind, and none else; others, they not only do not help, but try to destroy, and the most wicked part of the whole thing is, that they will not only *not* help others, but do not believe that they are sincere, and the sooner they get out the better. There is the failing of the whole thing. Suppose you are in a sect of philosophers, talking of the mystic wisdom of India and the East, and all these big psychological terms fifty syllables long, and suppose a man like me, a common every-day man, goes there and says "Can you tell me anything to make me spiritual?" The first thing they do is to smile and say "Oh you are too far below us in reason, to exist! What do you know of spirituality?" They are high up philosophers. They show you the door. Then there are the mystical sects, who are talking all sorts of things about different planes of existence, different states of mind, and what the power of the mind can do, and if you are an ordinary man and say "Show me anything good that I can do; I am not given much to that sort of speculation; can you give me anything that fits me?" They will smile, and say "Look at that fool: he is nobody; the only thing we advise you to do is to commit suicide; your existence is for nothing." And this is going on in the world. I would like to get extreme exponents of all these different sects, and shut them up in a room, and photograph that beautiful derisive smile of theirs.

This is the existing human nature, the existing condition of things. What I want to propose, is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds, it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally active. If your professors from the colleges come, your scientific men and physicists, they will want reason. Let them have it as much as they want. There will be a point where they will all give up, and say go not beyond this. If they say give up this thing, it is superstitious, these ideas

of God and salvation, are superstition, I say "Mr. Philosopher, this is a bigger superstition, this body. Give *it* up, don't go home to dinner or your philosophic chair. Give up the body, and if you cannot, cry quarter, and sit down there." In religion there must be that side, and we must be able to show how to realize the philosophy which teaches that this world is one, that there is but one existence in the universe. Similarly, if the mystic comes, we must be ready to show him the science of mental analysis, practically demonstrate it before him. Here you are, come, learn, nothing is "done in a corner." And if emotional people come, we will sit with them and weep and weep in the name of the Lord; we will "drink the cup of love and become mad." If the worker comes we will go and work with him, work with all the energy that he has. And this will be the ideal of the nearest approach to a universal religion. Would to God that all men were so harmoniously blended, that in their minds, *all* these various elements of philosophy, of mysticism, of emotion, and work were present, and yet that is the ideal, my ideal of a man. Everyone who has only one or two of these, I call 'one-sided' and that is why this world is almost full of these "one-sided" men, with only one road in which they can move, and anything else is dangerous and horrible to them. The attempt to help mankind to become wonderfully balanced in these four directions, is *my* ideal of religion. And this religion is what we, in India, call "Yoga," union between God and man, union between the lower self and the higher self. To the worker, it is union between men and the whole of humanity. To the mystic between his lower and higher self. To the lover, union between him and the God of love, and to the philosopher, it is union of *all* existence. This is what is meant by Yoga. This is a Sanscrit term, and these four divisions in Sanskrit have different names. The man who seeks after this union is called Yogi. The

worker is called Karma Yogi, He who seeks it through love is called Bhakti Yogi; he who seeks it through mysticism is called Raja Yogi. and he who seeks it through philosophy is called Gnana Yogi. So this word Yoga comprises them all

Now first of all I will take up Raja Yoga. What is this Raja Yoga, controlling the mind? In this country you are associating all sorts of hobgoblins with the word Yoga. I am afraid therefore, I must start by telling you that it has nothing to do with such things. No one of these Yogas, gives up reason, no one of them asks you to deliver your reason, hoodwinked, into the hands of priests, of any type whatever. No one of them asks that you give your allegiance to any superhuman messenger. Each one of them tells you to *cling* to your reason, to hold fast to reason. We find in all beings three sorts of instruments of knowledge. The first is the instinct, which you find mostly in animals, and to some degree in man the lowest instrument of knowledge. What is the second instrument of knowledge? Reasoning. You find that mostly in men. Now in the first place instinct is insufficient; as you see in the animals, the sphere of their action is very limited, and within that limit, instinct acts. When it comes in man, it is developed into reason. The sphere has become enlarged. Yet it is still very insufficient. It can get only a little way and then it stops. There it tells us, it cannot go any further, and if you want to push it any further, the result is helpless confusion, reason itself becomes unreasonable. The whole of logic becomes an argument in a circle. Take for instance the very basis of our perception, matter and force. What is matter? That which is acted upon by force; and force? that which acts upon matter. You see the complication, what the logicians call see-saw, one idea depending on the other, and that also depending on this one. You find a tremendous wall before the reason, beyond which reasoning cannot go, yet it wants to get

into the infinite beyond. This world of ours, this universe which our senses feel, or our mind thinks of, is but one bit of the infinite, which has been projected into the plane of consciousness, and within that little limit, which has been caught in the network of consciousness, works our reason, and not beyond. Therefore there must be some other instrument to take us beyond, and that instrument is called inspiration. So instinct, reason and inspiration are the three instruments of knowledge. Instinct belongs to the animals, reason to men, and inspiration to God-men. But in all human beings are the germs of these three instruments of knowledge. They have got to be evolved, but they must be there. This must be remembered, that one is the development of the other, and therefore does not contradict the other. It is reason that develops into inspiration, and therefore inspiration does not contradict reason, but fulfils. Things which reason cannot get, are brought to light by inspiration, but do not contradict reason. The old man does not contradict the child, but fulfils the child. Therefore you must always remember this, that the great danger lies here. Many times instinct is presented before the world as inspiration, and then come all the spurious claims. A fool or semi-lunatic thinks the jargons going on in his brain are inspirations, and he wants men to follow him. The most contradictory, irrational, nonsense has been preached in the world, simply the instinctive jargon of lunatic brains, trying to pass for inspiration.

The first test must be, that it must *not* contradict reason. So you see this is the basis of all these Yogas. We take the Raja Yoga, the psychological Yoga, the psychological way to union. It is a vast subject, and I will only point out to you the central idea of this Yoga. There is one method in all knowledge that we have. From the lowest to the highest, from the smallest worm to the highest Yogi, they have to use the same method, and that method

is called concentration. The chemist who is working in his laboratory has concentrated all the powers of his mind, and brought them into one focus, and thrown them on the elements, and they stand analyzed, and his knowledge comes. The astronomer has concentrated the thoughts of his mind, and brought them into one focus and he throws them through his telescope, and stars, and systems roll forward, and give up their mysteries to him. So in every case. The Professor in his chair, the student with his book, every man who is working. You are hearing me, and if my words interest you, your mind will be concentrated, and suppose a clock strikes or something happens, you will not hear it on account of this, and the more you are able to concentrate your mind the better you will understand me, and the more I concentrate my love and powers, the better I will be able to tell you what I want to convey, and the more this power of concentration is in the mind the more knowledge it can get, because this is the one and only method of knowledge. Down to the lowest shoeblack, if he has more concentration he will black shoes better, the cook will cook a meal better. In making money or in worshipping God, or doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that work be. This is the one call, the one knock which opens the gates of nature, and lets out the floods of light. This is the only key, the one power, concentration. This system of Raja Yoga deals almost exclusively with this. In the present state of our body we are so much distracted, the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. As soon as I try to calm my thoughts, and concentrate my mind upon one object of knowledge, thousands of thoughts rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check that, bring it under control, this is the whole subject of study in Raja Yoga.

We take the next, Karma Yoga, that of work. It is evident in society how there are so many persons who like some sort of activity, whose mind cannot be concentrated upon the plane of thought alone, and who have but one idea, concretised in work, visible and tangible. Yet there must be a science of that too. Each one of us is working, but the majority of us fritter away the greater portion of our energies because we do not know the secret of work. Where to work and how to work is the secret, how to employ the most part of our energies, how to bring them all to bear on the work that is before us, and along with that comes the other great objection with all work; work must cause pain, and all misery and pain come from attachment. I want to do work, I want to do good to a human being, and it is so to me that that human being that I have helped, will be ungrateful, and go against me, and the result is pain. That will deter mankind from working, and spoils a good portion of their work and of the energy of mankind, this fear and this misery. Karma Yoga teaches how to work for work's sake, unattached, without caring who is helped, and what for. The Karma Yogi works through his own nature, because it is good to work, and has no object beyond that. His station in this world is that of a giver, and he never receives. He knows that he is giving, and does not ask anything back, and therefore he eludes the grasp of misery. The grasp of pain which comes, is the reaction from "attachment."

There is then Bhakti Yoga, for the emotional nature, the lover. He wants to love God, he wants all sorts of rituals, flowers, and incense, beautiful buildings, forms and all these things. Do you mean to say they are wrong? One fact I will tell you. It is better for you to remember in this country especially that spiritual giants have been only produced by those sects which have got a very rich mythology and ritual. All those sects who wanted to worship God without any form or ceremony, crushed without mercy every-

thing that was beautiful and sublime. Their religion becomes a fanaticism at best, a dry thing. The history of the world is a standing witness to this fact. Therefore do not decry these rituals and these mythologies. Let people have them; let those who desire go through them. Neither have that little derisive smile,—“they are fools; let them have it.” Not so; the greatest men I have seen in my life, the most wonderfully developed, have all come from these rituals. I do not hold myself worthy to stand at their feet. For *me* to criticise *them*! How do I know how these ideas act upon the human mind, what to accept and what to reject? We go on criticising everything in the world. Therefore let them have it. Let people have all the mythology they want, all the beautiful inspirations they want, for you must always know that these emotional natures do not care for your definition of the truth. God to them is something tangible the only thing that is real; they feel, hear and see it and love it; they do not stop to analyze it. Your rationalist seems to be like that fool, who, when he saw a beautiful statue wanted to break it to pieces to see the material it was made of. Let them have God. Bhakti Yoga teaches them how to love, how to love without any ulterior motives, loving good for good's sake, and not for going to heaven, for instance, to get a child, or wealth, or anything else. It teaches them that love itself is the highest recompense of love. The old doctrine that God himself is love. It teaches him to give all sorts of tribute to God as the Creator, the omnipresent, the omnipotent, almighty ruler, the Father or Mother, the highest word that can be said of Him, the highest idea that the human mind can construe about Him is that He is the God of love. Wherever there is love, it is He. “Wherever there is any love it is He, the Lord, present there.” Where the husband kisses the wife, He is there in the kiss; where mother kisses the child, He is there; friends clasp their hands, He, the

Lord. is there present, standing as the God of love. When a great man wants to help mankind. He is there giving it as love to mankind. Wherever the heart expands He is there manifested. This is what the Bhakti Yoga teaches.

We lastly come to the Guana Yogi, the philosopher, the thinker, he who wants to go beyond. He is the man who is not satisfied with the little things of this world. His idea is to go beyond the routine work of eating, drinking and so on, not even the teachings of thousands of books will satisfy him. Not even these sciences will satisfy him ; they only bring this little world at best before him. What else? Not even whole systems, the Milky Way, the whole universe will satisfy him ; that is only a drop in the ocean of existence. His soul wants to go beyond all that into the very heart of being, by seeing reality as it is; by realizing it, being it, by becoming one with the Universal Being. That is the philosopher, to whom God is not only the Father or Mother, not only the Creator of this universe, its Protector, its Guide; these are but little words for him. For him God is the life of his life, and soul of his soul. God is His own Self. Nothing remains to him. All the mortal parts have been pounded by the ways of philosophy, and brushed away. What remains is God Himself.

Upon the same tree there are two birds, one on top, the other below. The one on the top is calm and silent, majestic, immersed in its own glory; the one below, on the lower branches, eating sweet and bitter fruits by turns, hopping from branch to branch and becoming happy and miserable by turns. After a time the lower bird ate an exceptionally bitter fruit, and got disgusted and looked up, and there was the other bird, that wondrous one of golden plumage. He eats not, neither sweet nor bitter. Neither is he happy or miserable, but calm, the self-centred one, nothing beyond his self. But the lower bird forgot it, and again began to eat the sweet and bitter

fruits of that tree. In a little while another exceptionally bitter fruit comes; he feels miserable looks up and goes forward, and wants to get nearer to the upper bird. Again he forgets and again looks up, and so he goes on. After a while an exceptionally bitter fruit comes, again he looks up, and comes nearer, and nearer, and nearer, the reflections of light from the plumage of that bird play around his own body, and he changes and seems to melt away; still nearer he comes, everything melts away, and at last he finds the change. The lower bird was only the shadow, the reflection; he, himself, was the upper bird all the time. This eating of fruits sweet and bitter, this lower little bird, weeping and happy by turns, was a vain chimera, a dream: the real bird was there calm and silent glorious and majestic, beyond grief, beyond sorrow. The upper bird is God, the Lord of this universe, and the lower bird is the human soul, eating the sweet and bitter fruits of this world, and then comes a blow. For a time he stops and goes towards the unknown for a moment, and a flood of light comes. He thinks this world is vain. He goes a little further, yet again the senses drag him down, and he begins to eat the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. Again an exceptionally hard blow comes. He becomes open again; thus he approaches and approaches, and as he gets nearer and nearer he finds his old self melting away, and that he is God. When he has come near enough he finds "He whom I have preached to you as the life of this universe, who is present in the atom, who is present in the big suns and moons, He is the basis of our own life, the background of our soul. Nay, thou art that." That is what this Gnana Yoga teaches. It tells man he is the essentially divine. It shows to mankind the real unity of being, that each one of us is the Lord God himself, manifested on earth. Each one of us, from the lowest worm that crawls under our feet to the highest beings

at whom we look with awe, all these are manifestations of the same Lord.

Then again all these various Yogas have to be carried out into practice; theories will not do. First we have to hear, then we have to think. Reason it out, impress it in your mind, and lastly, we have to meditate upon it, realize it, until it becomes our whole life. No more it remains as ideas or as theories. it comes into our Self. Religion is realization. not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is not an intellectual assent, but the whole nature becoming changed into it. That is religion. By intellectual assent we can come to a hundred sorts of foolish things, and change next day, but this being and becoming is what is religion.



CLASS LECTURES.

228 West 39th Street, New York City.

MONDAYS: "*BHAKTI YOGA*," - - - 11 A.M. 8 P.M.

WEDNESDAYS: "*GNANA YOGA*," - - - 11 A.M. 8 P.M.

FRIDAYS: *QUESTION CLASS*, - - - 8 P.M.

SATURDAYS: "*RAJA YOGA*," - - - 11 A.M. 8 P.M.